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MEMOIR—CHARLES HOWARD PECK

Born June 18, 1870—Died March 28, 1927

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IT is with a sense of deepest personal loss not unmixed with sorrow that I record the passing of Dr. Charles Howard Peck, master surgeon, earnest patriot, distinguished teacher, benefactor of mankind, and my friend. An association of twenty years begun in the formative, youthful days of our earliest professional efforts and ripening into closest companionship, closed when he answered the final summons March 28, 1927.

Such intimate acquaintance afforded abundant opportunities to observe and admire a many-sided character, beautiful in its simple faith, strong in its devotion to study, unyielding in its adherence to principle, superb in its fidelity to friends and professional contemporaries. A brilliant, full and varied career, brought to an untimely close at the height of its productiveness, cut down at the full tide of its usefulness, emphasizes how much service may be crowded into an all-too-brief period of existence. Few gave more than he in the short span of fifty-six years allotted to him; few accomplished so much in their chosen walk of life; and of few may it be more truly said, that those who knew him best loved him best.

Appreciation is measured in superlative terms by friends, but in this instance, deservedly so, as is evidenced by the manifold tributes and expressions of sorrow among companions, acquaintances, and people of all walks of life. Of his many admirable qualities, the kindliness, charity, and benevolence of his friendship endeared him most, I think. The supreme happiness which he enjoyed in the companionship of his professional associates, and their confidence and appreciation of his talents, signify the high plane of ideals which governed his every action. Quiet, kindly, cheerful, without malice, zealous in any cause he espoused, earnest in the execution of his duties, he moved among his fellows, an example and inspiration to all.

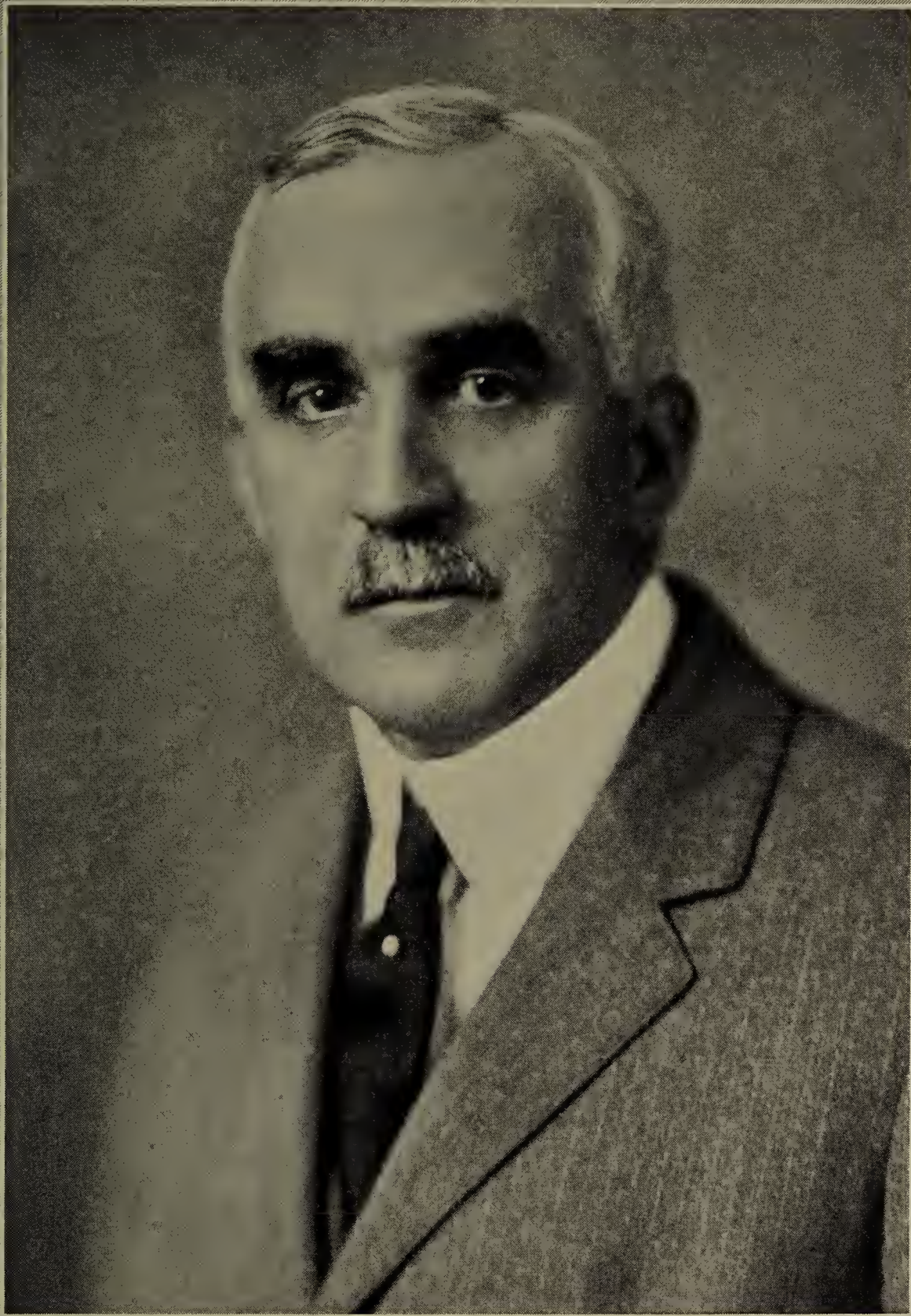
His unselfishness and self-sacrificing intent is nowhere better illustrated than by his distinguished war record. Actively engaged in teaching, and busy with a large private practice, his patriotism prompted him to join the colors immediately upon the admission of the United States into the World War, and he served with credit and distinction throughout its course, in France, receiving merited

decorations from his own and foreign governments. Commissioned a Major at the outbreak of war, Dr. Peck organized and directed Base Hospital No. 15, which early arrived in France and was stationed at Chaumont from July, 1917, to July, 1919. During this time he served first as senior consultant in surgery in the American Expeditionary Forces, and in August, 1918, he was transferred to the Surgeon General's office in Washington, D. C., as a chief in the department of general surgery, where he remained on duty until his honorable discharge from service with the rank of Colonel, February 4, 1919. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal of the U.S.A., March 26, 1919; the French government made him an Officier de l'Instruction Publique, French Republic, and for services rendered during the second battle of the Chemin des Dames, October, 1917, he was quoted in orders "for service rendered to the French Army" and he was made an honorary member of the 68th Battalion Alpine Chasseurs. A son, Charles Howard Peck, Jr., made the supreme sacrifice in France, serving in his father's unit.

No less distinguished was Dr. Peck's career as surgeon and teacher. Graduating at the early age of twenty-two years, in 1892, at the head of his class, from the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, he served three years in the New York Hospital, engaging in private practice after this, with appointments first as assistant to the Hudson Street Hospital, New York, for two years (1895-1897), attending surgeon to the French Hospital (1897-1899), then on the surgical staff of the Roosevelt Hospital January 1, 1904, serving through the various grades until the date of his death. He was actively engaged in the teaching of surgery in his Alma Mater from 1900 until the time of his death; he had been professor of clinical surgery since 1910. Numerous other hospital appointments fell to his lot, among them: consulting surgeon to the Ruptured and Crippled, New York City; to the White Plains Hospital and Nyack Hospital, New York; to the Vassar Brothers Hospital, Poughkeepsie, New York; and to the Greenwich and Stamford Hospitals, Connecticut.

As a surgeon, he was resourceful, meticulous, noted for kindness to tissue and scrupulous hæmostasis, skillful in operative maneuvers, and possessed of a mature judgment, the fruit of long and ripe experience.

Honored by membership in many surgical societies, he served as president of the Society of Clinical Surgery; treasurer of the American Surgical Association and member of its council from 1915 until the time of his death; fellow of the American College of Surgeons and member of its Board of Regents; president of the New York Surgical Society; vice-president of the New York Academy of Medicine; member of the American Medical Association and chairman of the section on surgery, 1915; member of the New York County Medical Society, and president, 1919; member of the New York State Medical Society; member of the International Surgical Association; and others.



Charles H. Peck

While not a prolific writer, Dr. Peck's contributions to surgical literature were marked by their evidence of thorough study and extensive experience, by their concern of problems of deep interest at the time of their publication and by a scholarly diction, clearly expressed, and definite and worth while viewpoints. His interests covered the broad field of general surgery with a grasp and knowledge which compelled his recognition as a leader of his chosen profession.

